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THE NEW MUTANTS™

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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE NEW MUTANTS™

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WELCOME TO PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS. THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE HIS STUDENTS, THE NEW MUTANTS:

SAM GUTHRIE

ROBERTO da COSTA

DANIELLE MOONSTAR

RAHNE SINCLAIR

XI'AN COY MANH

THE LADY IS ONE OF THEIR TEACHERS, STEVIE HUNTER.

INITIATION!

IS THIS REALLY NECESSARY, STEVIE?

AND WHY DID YOU HAVE TO LET THE OTHERS WATCH?!

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I COULDN'T STOP THEM, SWEET-HEART.

HOLD YOUR BREATH.

SPLUSH

⇒BLURRGH!⇐

YOU'LL THANK ME WHEN I'M FINISHED. YOU'RE A LOVELY WOMAN, SHAN. YOU NEED A HAIR STYLE TO MATCH. YOUR OLD ONE WAS JUST PLAIN AWFUL.

M' HAIR'LL NE'ER LOOK PRETTY.

IT NE'ER SEEMS T' *GROW!*

DO NOT BE SO SAD, RAHNE. IT SUITS YOU, PERFECTLY.

AND ITS COLOR IS AS FIERY...

... AS YOUR SPIRIT.

⇒OCH!⇐

WHOOF! BOY, YOU CERTAINLY HAVE *STYLE!*

IN MY NATIVE BRAZIL, STEVIE, TO ADMIRE WHAT IS BEAUTIFUL IS MERELY GOOD MANNERS.

HE-- *KISSED* ME!

DOES THA' MEAN, THEN, HE *LIKES* ME?

I DO NOT CONSIDER *THIS* AN IMPROVEMENT.

TRUST ME.

ROBERTO'S A REAL CHARMER-- AND HE KNOWS IT.

I HOPE HE'S CAREFUL OF RAHNE'S FEELINGS. HER FUNDAMENTALIST SCOTS UPBRINGING HAS MADE HER TERRIBLY INNOCENT. AND VULNERABLE.

Oh, ROBERTO, IF ONLY YOU WOULD LOOK AT ME SO. MY HEART, SHE GOES PITTER-PAT. I FAINT. I SWOON!

STEVIE-- PLEASE, PLEASE, ***PLEASE*** PERFORM YOUR WIZARDRY ON ME. I TOO AM AN UGLY DUCKLING YEARNING TO BE A SWAN.

HUSH, DANI. HOLD STILL, SHAN.

CLAP CLAP

WHAT DID I EVER DO TO DESERVE THIS?

SUDDENLY...

WHAT--!?!

MA MÉRE! MA PÈRE! C'EST ***IMPOSSIBLE!***

WITHOUT WARNING, DANI'S PSI-POWERS HAVE INTER-FACED WITH SHAN'S MIND, PULLING MEMORIES FROM THE YOUNG VIETNAMESE'S DEEPEST SUBCONSCIOUS AND PROJECTING THEM AS THREE-DIMENSIONAL IMAGES, AS REAL AS LIFE.

SHAN'S FATHER-- A FORMER ARMY COLONEL--SLAIN AS THE FAMILY FLED SOUTH VIETNAM, BARELY A YEAR AGO.

HER MOTHER-- SPARED BY THE THAI PIRATES WHO ATTACKED THEIR BOAT IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, TO SUFFER A FAR CRUELER FATE...

... AND SHAN HERSELF, WHO SUFFERS THE SAME FATE...

*... IN A DESPERATE BID TO PROTECT HER LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER-- **LEONG** AND **NGA**.*

MOTHER WAS LUCKY. SHE DID NOT SURVIVE HER ORDEAL.

SHAN DID.

MONSTER!!

SHAN -- NO!

I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T MEAN--!

LIAR!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE MY FRIEND -- YET YOU REVEAL MY SHAME FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE!

WHUNK

STOP IT, GIRL! YOU'RE KILLING HER!

DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND -- IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! DANI MEANT NO HARM!

GET AWAY FROM ME!

NOW, IT'S SHAN'S TURN TO LASH OUT WITH HER MUTANT POWER AS SHE **POSSESSES** STEVIE, SEIZING CONTROL OF HER MIND AND BODY.

ONLY THE SHOCK OF ROBERTO'S SLAP BREAKS HER CONCENTRATION, THEREBY RELEASING STEVIE.

SPAK!

OWW!

SHAN, PLEASE BELIEVE ME-- I'D GIVE ANY-THING FOR THIS NEVER TO HAVE HAPPENED.

AND WHAT WILL YOU SAY NEXT TIME, *SORCIERE*-- WHEN YOU'VE LAID BARE OUR VERY *SOULS*?!

IF I COULD POSSESS YOU, I'D HAVE YOU RIP THE LIVING HEART FROM YOUR OWN BREAST! I WOULD MAKE YOU ***SUFFER!*** BUT -- I CAN'T ***LET*** MYSELF!

I CAN'T!

I... CAN'T.

DANI, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A WALK, 'TIL SHAN COOLS DOWN. PROBABLY DO YOU BOTH SOME GOOD.

STEVIE...

EVERYTHING'LL BE ALL RIGHT, CHILD, DON'T YOU WORRY.

I THINK SHAN'D RATHER BE ALONE FOR AWHILE, KIDS. I'LL YELL IF WE NEED YOU, OKAY?

DANI LOOKED MISERABLE WHEN SHE LEFT.

I'M GOING TO FIND HER.

LEAVE HER BE, BOBBY!

I WANT TO HELP HER, SAM.

YOU THINK AH DON'T? BUT THIS AIN'T THE WAY. AH GOT A PASSEL O' SISTERS, BACK HOME IN KENTUCKY, AN' WE'VE HAD OUR SHARE O' SCRAPS. AH LEARNED THE HARD WAY HOW T' HANDLE 'EM.

AN' IT AIN'T BY CROWDIN' HER.

PERHAPS. BUT IT IS NOT DANI ALONE I AM WORRIED ABOUT. SHAN WAS NOT JOKING WHEN SHE MADE HER THREATS. AND HER POWERS GIVE HER THE ABILITY TO MAKE THEM REAL WITH CONSUMMATE EASE.

HARDLY AN AUSPICIOUS BEGINNING FOR THE SCHOOL, IS IT, SAM?

ELSEWHERE IN THE SPRAWLING MANSION...

MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE *LET* SHAN BASH MY BRAINS OUT. IT WAS NO LESS THAN I DESERVED.

BEFORE HE DIED, MY GRANDFATHER COMMANDED ME TO LEAVE MY WYOMING MOUNTAINS-- TO COME HERE AND LET PROFESSOR XAVIER TEACH ME TO CONTROL MY ACCURSED MUTANT ABILITIES.

BUT ALL XAVIER'S DONE IS GIVE ME A STUPID COSTUME, AND MAKE MY LIFE MISERABLE.

WHERE AM I, ANYWAY? I'VE NEVER BEEN IN THIS WING.

OH! THIS MUST BE WHERE HIS OTHER STUDENTS-- THE ONES STEVIE CALLS "*X-MEN*"-- LIVE.

NICE ROOM-- AS MESSY AS MINE.

Call Illyana at 5!!

WHAT STRANGE-LOOKING PEOPLE.

I'VE MET ILLYANA RASPUTIN-- SHE'S IN ENGLAND WITH THE PROFESSOR'S PARTNER, Dr. MacTAGGERT-- SHE WAS A NICE KID, BUT WEIRD.

I WONDER IF SHE'S A MUTANT, LIKE US.

THE PROFESSOR NEVER TALKS ABOUT THE X-MEN. SOMETHING TERRIBLE MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO THEM. ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THEIR PLACE?

WILL THEIR FATE ... BE *OURS?*

WHO CARES? I PROBABLY WON'T BE AROUND TO SHARE IT...

...EVEN IF I WANTED TO.

MY POWERS ARE DESTROYING MY LIFE-- AND ANY CHANCE FOR FRIENDSHIP OR HAPPINESS HERE...

... JUST LIKE THEY DID BACK HOME.

IT ISN'T FAIR!

GOSH!

I FIGURED THIS ATTIC TO BE A STOREROOM-- MAYBE A PLACE FOR ME TO HIDE.

BUT SOMEONE *LIVES* HERE!

I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY PLANTS. THEY'RE BEAUTIFUL!

DOESN'T ANYBODY LOOK AFTER THEM? THEY'RE WILTED-- DYING FOR LACK OF WATER.

PEOPLE ARE SO CRUEL. PLANTS ARE LIVING THINGS-- THEY DESERVE AS MUCH CONSIDERATION AS HUMAN BEINGS.

DRINK UP, LITTLE ONES! THERE'S LOTS MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM.

THE ATTIC RUNS THE FULL WIDTH OF THE HOUSE.

IT'LL TAKE ME HOURS TO DO A PROPER JOB.

SO WHAT? I'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO.

HI! I'M DANI!

SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME LATER...

MY STOMACH IS GROWLING. I BET I MISSED LUNCH.

I WONDER IF SHAN'S STILL MAD AT ME? HOW DO I PUT THINGS RIGHT WITHOUT MAKING THEM WORSE? MAYBE STEVIE OR THE PROFESSOR KNOW-- THAT IS, IF THEY'RE NOT MAD, TOO.

STUDENTS!

THE PROFESSOR'S ASTRAL IMAGE! HE'S CONTACTING US *TELE-PATHICALLY.*

PLEASE DON YOUR COSTUMES AND REPORT TO ME IN THE **DANGER ROOM**-- *FOR YOUR* **FIRST TRAINING SESSION!**

LONDON--

--THE RESIDENCE OF THE ISRAELI AMBASSADOR...

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHY WE'VE BEEN SUMMONED, MOIRA?

NOT THE SLIGHTEST, POPPET.

BUT I'M SURE WE'LL SOON FIND OUT.

MADAME AMBASSADOR-- Dr. MOIRA MacTAGGERT AND MISS ILLYANA RASPUTIN...

I'M GABRIELLE HALLER. THANK YOU FOR COMING.

YOU MUST HAVE HAD A LONG JOURNEY FROM MUIR ISLE. I SUGGEST DINNER FIRST. THEN, WE'LL TALK.

AND SO, AFTER A SUPERB MEAL...

YOUR REPUTATION--IN THE FIELD OF MUTANT GENETICS--IS CONSIDERABLE, MOIRA. SO IS MY NEED.

I HAVE A SON--NOT MUCH OLDER THAN YOU, ILLYANA. AN AUTISTIC CHILD.

THAT'S A BIT OUT OF MY LINE, Dr. HALLER. I'M NO' A PSYCHIATRIST.

HIS AUTISM IS MERELY A SYMPTOM OF SOMETHING FAR MORE SERIOUS. THE BOY IS A MUTANT. I BELIEVE HIS ABILITIES ARE PRIMARILY PSIONIC--TELEPATHY, POSSIBLY TELEKINESIS.

I HAVE TRIED EVERY MEANS TO HELP HIM, WITHOUT SUCCESS.

I TURN TO YOU AS A LAST RESORT.

I'M FLATTERED. BUT MY WORK IS THEORETICAL IN NATURE, NOT PRACTICAL. THE PERSON Y'NEED IS MY COLLEAGUE, CHARLES XAVIER...

I WANT CHARLES KEPT OUT OF THIS.

WHY, F'R HEAVEN'S SAKE?! IF Y'KNOW HIM...

KOFF KOFF

...Y' ALSO MUST REALIZE THA' HE'S FAR BETTER EQUIPPED THAN I T' DEAL WI' THIS SITUATION.

I HAVE MY REASONS.

AN' I'VE A RIGHT T' HEAR THEM.

VERY WELL--SINCE YOU INSIST.

CHARLES XAVIER... IS THE BOY'S FATHER.

WELCOME TO THE *DANGER ROOM*, STUDENTS. ALL OF ITS SYSTEMS ARE CONTROLLED FROM THIS BOOTH. IN ADDITION, ITS COMPUTERS WILL MONITOR AND EVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS.

AHEM!

STEVIE, AH GOTTA HAND IT TO YOU. SHAN'S NEVER LOOKED BETTER.

MERCI, SAM. YOU ARE TOO KIND.

BEFORE WE BEGIN-- SOME OF YOU ARE NO DOUBT CURIOUS ABOUT THE RESIDENTS OF THE MANSION'S OTHER WING. THERE IS, I AM SURE, A QUITE NATURAL TEMPTATION TO EXPLORE.

IMAGINE, THOUGH, HOW *YOU* WOULD FEEL WERE THE SITUATION REVERSED. THE PRIVACY OF OTHERS DESERVES AS MUCH RESPECT AS YOUR OWN.

HE'S TALKING TO EVERYONE-- BUT HE MEANS *ME*.

HE KNEW WHERE I WAS WHEN HE MINDCALLED US!

PROFESSOR, I'VE BEEN IN THE LIBRARY, READING THE HISTORY OF YOUR SCHOOL.

ARE WE TO BECOME THE *NEW X-MEN?*

NO!

YOUR... PARDON, ROBERTO, I DID NOT MEAN TO SNAP. THERE WILL BE A SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS-- WHOSE STUDENTS ARE MUTANTS-- BUT NEVER AGAIN WILL THERE BE THE X-MEN, A TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES.

THAT CHAPTER OF MY LIFE IS ENDED. FOREVER.

I... I WAS ONLY ASKING. IT WAS SOMETHING WE'VE ALL WONDERED ABOUT.

THE SUBJECT IS CLOSED.

NOW, PAY ATTENTION, STUDENTS, WHILE I EXPLAIN THE OPERATION OF THE MASTER CONSOLE.

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE, THE ROOM IS BURIED TEN METERS BENEATH THE MANSION. ACCESS IS STRICTLY LIMITED AND ITS DESIGN ENSURES THAT, WHATEVER HAPPENS HERE, THOSE UPSTAIRS WILL NOT BE DISTURBED.

UNDER *NO* CIRCUMSTANCES WHATSOEVER IS THE ROOM TO BE USED WITHOUT AN ADULT PRESENT--

--EITHER MYSELF, Dr. MacTAGGERT OR Ms. HUNTER.

I'LL NOW ACTIVATE THE BASIC GYMNASIUM MODE.

Ms. HUNTER WILL BE IN CHARGE OF YOUR PHYSICAL FITNESS INSTRUCTION.

YOU MAY BELIEVE YOU'RE IN GOOD SHAPE BUT YOU'LL SOON DISCOVER THAT--TO PROPERLY UTILIZE YOUR ABILITIES-- YOUR BODIES MUST BE HONED TO THE LEVEL OF CHAMPION ATHLETES.

SOUNDS T'ME LIKE...

...WE'RE GONNA BE WORKIN' OUAH TAILS OFF.

INDEED, SAM.

ALTHOUGH YOU NEW MUTANTS WILL NOT FUNCTION AS THE X-MEN DID-- ACTIVELY SEEKING OUT AND COMBATING EVIL MUTANTS-- YOU MUST BE PREPARED FOR EVERY EVENTUALITY.

THE GYM IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE IN RIO-IS AS WELL-EQUIPPED, PROFESSOR.

IS THAT A FACT, ROBERTO? TELL ME, CAN YOUR FATHER'S GYM--

--DO *THIS?*

BLESSED SAINTS!

WHAT HAPPENED?! EV'RYTHIN' CHANGED!

FAR OUT!

GET BACK! THE MONSTER'S CHARGING!

RRROARR!

PULL THE PROFESSOR AN' STEVIE OUTTA HERE, GIRLS! BOBBY AN' ME'LL TRY TO HOLD THAT CRITTER BACK!

IT'S-- GONE!?!

MAGIC!

WE WERE TRICKED! IT WAS ONLY SPECIAL EFFECTS, LIKE IN THE MOVIES!

IN PART, ROBERTO. I KEYED IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-PROGRAM, CAPABLE OF REPRODUCING ANY EXOTIC LOCALE IMAGINABLE.

IT INTERACTS WITH THE PRIMARY TRAINING PROGRAM THREATS AND PROBLEMS APPROPRIATE TO WHO-EVER'S IN THE ROOM, THEREBY GIVING THAT PERSON EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF THEIR POWERS, UNDER ACTUAL COMBAT CONDITIONS.

SOME ELEMENTS ARE ILLUSION--THREE-DIMENSIONAL HOLO-GRAPHIC PROJECTIONS--BUT OTHERS ARE PAINFULLY REAL. YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED.

HAPPILY, YOU WON'T SOON HAVE TO. THAT WAS PART OF AN X-MEN SEQUENCE-- A LEVEL YOU WON'T REACH FOR SOME TIME.

ALL RIGHT, YOUR OWN SEQUENCES ARE PRIMED AND READY.

YOUR TASK WILL BE SIMPLE-- MERELY CROSS THE ROOM TO THE EXIT AND LEAVE.

WHO'D LIKE TO GO FIRST?

CANNONBALL.

CROSS THE ROOM, huh?

SOUNDS EASY.

TOO DARN EASY.

HERE GOES NOTHIN'.

A MOMENT'S INTENSE CONCENTRATION IS ALL IT TAKES...

...TO TRIGGER THE THERMO-CHEMICAL REACTION IN AND AROUND SAM GUTHRIE'S BODY THAT PROPELS HIM THROUGH THE AIR LIKE A RUNAWAY ROCKET.

UNFORTUNATELY...

K-WAUNK!

=WHUNNGNH!=

MAN, IT'S A GOOD THING AH CAN'T BE HURT WHEN AH'M BLASTIN'-- OTHERWISE, THEY'D BE SCRAPIN' ME OFF THAT WALL. IT COME UP S' FAST, THERE WAS NOTHIN' I COULD DO.

AH GOT SPEED AN' POWER T' SPARE, BUT AH CAN'T TURN WORTH BEANS, OR STOP, LESS'N SOMETHIN' STOPS ME.

CRIPES, SOME KIND'A *FAN!*

PULLIN' ME IN -- CAN'T TURN MYSELF AROUND TO BLAST FREE!

YYROOWWWW--

AH'M BACK WHERE AH STARTED! AH FAILED -- AH DIDN'T EVEN GET HALFWAY.

WOLFSBANE.

SHE MOVES WARILY, USING HER LUPINE SENSES SCANNING THE ROOM FOR UNEXPECTED DANGER.

IT'S A GOOD PLAN.

IT DOESN'T WORK.

IN MID-LEAP, RAHNE SHIFTS TO A TRANSITIONAL FORM THAT COMBINES THE BEST ELEMENTS OF WOLF AND GIRL. SHE GRABS HOLD OF A LEDGE, BUT...

THE LEDGE-- IT'S MOVIN'! I CANNA HOLD ON!

IT'S FLIPPIN' ME--

--UP!

OUCH!

I DINNAE MAKE IT EITHER!

SUNSPOT.

IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO OUTWIT THE PROFESSOR. WITH HIS MENTAL POWERS, HE PROBABLY KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT WE ARE THINKING, OR FEELING.

IF HE READS MY MIND, I HOPE MY THOUGHTS MAKE HIM BLUSH-- THAT SOUND?!

A ROBOT!

I'M DISAPPOINTED. I WAS EXPECTING SOMETHING MORE ORIGINAL. ONE PUNCH SHOULD DEAL WITH THIS ANTIQUE.

ENERGY CRACKLES...

...AS THE BRAZILIAN YOUTH METABOLIZES THE KINETIC ENERGY OF THE SUN ITSELF TO FLOOD HIS MUSCLES WITH INCREDIBLE STRENGTH--

--AND STRIKES!

SPLOOTCH!

I'M STUCK!!

AND THE HARDER I TRY TO ESCAPE, THE MORE STUCK I BECOME!

ALSO--SINCE HIS RESERVE OF ENERGY IS LIMITED--THE MORE HE USES, THE SOONER HE BURNS HIMSELF OUT...

...AND REVERTS TO NORMAL.

THE OTHERS ARE LAUGHING-- WHY DO I FEEL SO AFRAID?

I DON'T UNDER-STAND. THE ROOM CAN'T REALLY HURT ME.

YET THE THOUGHT OF ENTERING IT SCARES ME TO DEATH.

KARMA.

OF US ALL, I ALONE HAVE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE USE OF MY ABILITIES. I HAVE FOUGHT AGAINST, AND BESIDE, *SPIDER-MAN* AND THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*. TO SAVE THEM-- AND MY BROTHER AND SISTER--

-- I USED THOSE POWERS TO *DESTROY* MY TWIN BROTHER, *TRANH.**

*IN TEAM-UP #100-- LOUISE.

I HAD NO CHOICE, BUT THAT DOES NOT MAKE THE MEMORY ANY EASIER TO BEAR.

I MUST BE CAREFUL. THE PROFESSOR CREATED A REAL SETTING FOR MY TEST, AND ORDERED THE OTHERS TO AMBUSH-- EH?!

CANNONBALL!

WITH A THOUGHT, KARMA POSSESSES SAM AND SENDS HIM CAREENING INTO SUNSPOT.

THAT SHOULD HOLD THEM...

... BUT WHERE IS *WOLFSBANE?!*

RYYYYI!

BETTER LUCK NEXT TIME, eh, SHAN-- SORRY, AH MEAN, "*KARMA.*" AH GOTTA REMEMBER WE'RE S'POSED T' USE OUR CODE NAMES WHEN WE'RE IN COSTUME.

A PERFECT SCORE, MY FRIENDS: DANGER ROOM FOUR, MUTANTS ZERO. I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE PROFESSOR HAS IN STORE FOR DANI.

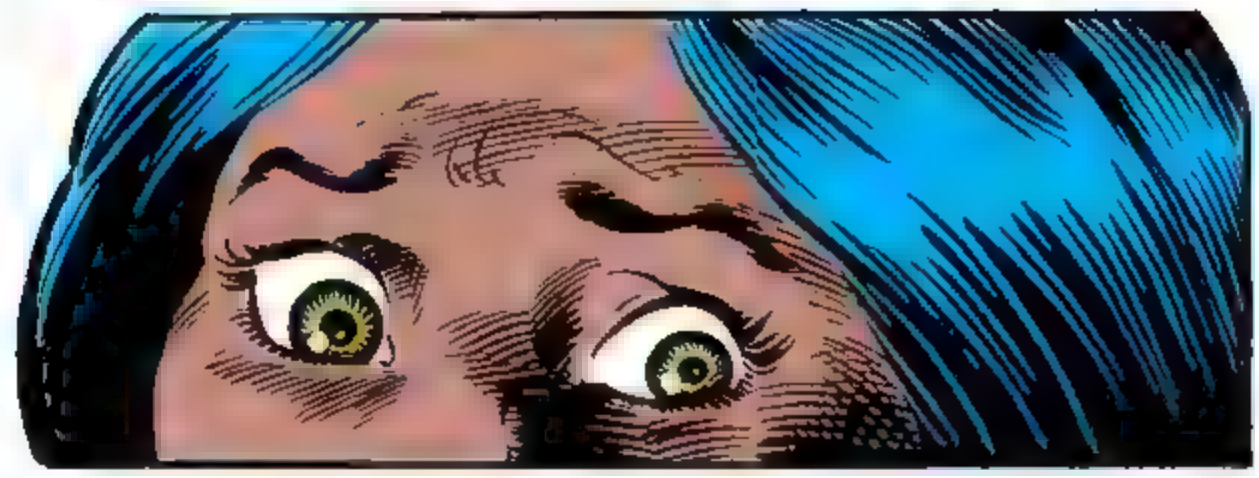
RAHNE, STOP IT, I LIKE YOU, TOO. FOR PITY'S SAKE, ENOUGH! *HELP!*

PSYCHE.

I CAN'T. IF I ENTER THE DANGER ROOM, I'LL *DIE*.

THAT'S STUPID. GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF, GIRL. THE OTHERS GOT THROUGH WITHOUT A SCRATCH. SO WILL YOU.

OOO



PSYCHE, IT'S YOUR TURN.

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, CHILD? YOU SEEM TENSE.

NO. I'M FINE.

DOES HE KNOW THIS, TOO?! HAS HE LOOKED INTO MY MIND AND SEEN I'M A COWARD?!

I'VE NEVER BEEN SO SCARED. IT GETS WORSE WITH EVERY STEP.

DANGE ROOM

WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I DON'T BELONG HERE!

SHAN'S INSIDE. I'M SUPPOSED TO FIGHT HER AND THE OTHERS. WHO KNOWS WHAT HIDDEN HORROR I MIGHT PULL FROM ANY OF THEIR MINDS!

WHAT IF SHAN STILL BEARS A GRUDGE FOR WHAT HAPPENED THIS MORNING?

WHAT IF SHE HATES ME?

SHE THREATENED TO KILL ME THEN. THIS COULD BE HER CHANCE.

NO!

... AS IF ALL THE DEVILS IN HELL ARE NIPPING AT HER HEELS.

... DANI RUNS FOR HER LIFE...

...TORN FROM HER HEART AND SOUL...

WITH THAT CRY...

XAVIER'S ESTATE SPRAWLS FOR THREE MILES ALONG THE LAKESHORE, RISING TO AN IMPOSING BLUFF-- WITH A MAJESTIC VIEW-- AT THE EASTERN END.

IT IS THERE THAT RAHNE FINDS DANI.

ARE Y' OKAY, DANI?

SURE. WHY SHOULDN'T I BE?

YOU RAN AWAY SO SUDDENLY, WI'OUT EXPLANATION. I WAS WORRIED.

DID THE OTHERS SEND YOU?

NO. I CAME ON MY OWN.

THEY DIDN'T CARE, *huh*?

DON'T BE DAFT. IT'S JUST THEY HAD NO IDEA ANYTHING WAS WRONG.

AND YOU KNEW BETTER?

AYE. IN WOLF FORM, I COULD TELL FROM YUIR SCENT Y'HAVE A VERY NICE SCENT, Y'KNOW. I LIKE IT.

Oh, DANI, IT'S SO NEAT! I CAN SEE AN' HEAR AN' TASTE AN' SMELL SO ***MANY*** THINGS AS A WOLF THAT I NE'ER DREAMED EXISTED!

I'M GLAD YOUR POWER MAKES YOU HAPPY, RAHNE. I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE RID OF MINE.

IS THA' WHY YOU'RE SO MISERABLE?

CAN YOU TELL THAT FROM MY SCENT?

I THINK SO. I'VE NOT QUITE WORKED EVERYTHING OUT YET.

IT'S SO MUCH FUN-- LIFE'S SO SIMPLE AN' UNCOMPLICATED-- THA', SOMETIMES I FIND MYSEL' WISHING I COULD STAY A WOLF FOREVER, AN' NE'ER BE HUMAN AGAIN.

I'D MISS YOU.

OCH, I'D NE'ER LEAVE MY FRIENDS, DANI, NO MATTER WHAT!

I NAE HAD ANY T' SPEAK OF-- IN SCOTLAND.

WE HAVE THAT IN COMMON.

THOUGH I HAD FRIENDS-- UNTIL MY POWERS CAME INTO BEING. THEN, IT-- I-- DROVE THEM AWAY. ALMOST OVERNIGHT, I BECAME AN OUTCAST, DISOWNED BY EVERYONE I KNEW-- AND LOVED.

MY FOLKS -- BLESS 'EM -- STOOD BY ME. SO DID MY GRAND-FATHER, ***BLACK EAGLE***. BUT ONE MID-WINTER NIGHT-- YEARS AGO NOW, BUT IT FEELS LIKE YESTER-DAY-- I REACHED INTO MY DAD'S MIND...

... AND PULLED OUT A NIGHT-MARE.

I DIDN'T MEAN TO. I TRIED TO STOP. I COULDN'T. WE SAW A BEAR STANDING OVER THE BLOODY REMAINS OF A PALOMINO PONY, FIGHTING OFF A GOLDEN EAGLE. THE BEAR KILLED THE EAGLE.

MY FATHER WAS EAGLE CLAN, MY MOTHER HORSE CLAN.

RAHNE, I'D SHOWN THEM THEIR DEATHS!

I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, OF COURSE, AND THEY MADE LIGHT OF WHAT WE'D SEEN.

WHAT HAPPENED?

A WEEK LATER, DAD PACKED THE TRUCK FOR A TRIP TO THE HIGH COUNTRY. HE TOOK HIS BEST GUNS AND BOW... HE LOOKED LIKE A WARRIOR PREPARING FOR BATTLE. MOM INSISTED ON GOING WITH HIM.

THEY LEFT ME IN BLACK EAGLE'S CARE.

I NEVER SAW THEM AGAIN.

NOT LONG AFTER THAT, I FLED TO THE MOUNTAINS MYSELF, TO LIVE AS A HERMIT. THEN, LAST MONTH, IT HAPPENED AGAIN. FROM MY GRAND-FATHER'S MIND, I PULLED THE IMAGE OF ***HIS*** MURDER. *

ALL I SEEM ABLE TO DO WITH THIS POWER IS HURT PEOPLE--ESPECIALLY THOSE I CARE FOR MOST. WHEN THE PROFESSOR ASKED ME TO JOIN HIM, I HATED THE IDEA AT FIRST--

--BUT LATER, ONCE I'D MET YOU GUYS, I THOUGHT I WOULD FINALLY GET THE CHANCE TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AGES, I ALLOWED MYSELF TO HOPE.

SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.

*SEE NEW MUTANTS GRAPHIC NOVEL -- L.

NOT ONLY HAVE I HURT SHAN, BUT I'VE DISGRACED MY NAME AND HERITAGE-- I'M A *COWARD*, RAHNE! I COULDN'T FACE SOMETHING THE REST OF YOU HANDLED WITH EASE!

I WAS SCARED, DANI.

BUT YOU DIDN'T RUN.

DANI, Y' MUST NA' BLAME YOURSELF...

... FOR SOMETHING THAT ISNA' YOUR FAULT. NONE OF US REALLY KNOW WHAT WE'RE ABOUT WITH OUR POWERS. WE'RE *ALL* LEARNING-- IS NA' THA' WHY WE'RE HERE?!

PLEASE BELIEVE ME, DANI, SHAN DOES NA' BLAME YOU! SHE KNOWS IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! SHE REACTED THE WAY SHE DID BECAUSE YOU CAUGHT HER BY SURPRISE. AN' IF SHE WERE HERE BESIDE ME, SHE'D TELL YOU SO HERSEL' -- WHAT'S THAT?!

HONK HONK

STEVIE'S CAR HORN. YOU GOING SOMEWHERE?

HERE COMES RAHNE. NO SIGN OF DANI, THOUGH.

CHARLES WAS AWFULLY RELUCTANT TO SEARCH FOR HER TELEPATHICALLY. HE DIDN'T SEEM TERRIBLY DISTURBED BY HER PANIC, EITHER. MAYBE I'M OUT OF LINE, BUT THE KID SEEMED PRETTY UPSET TO ME. CHARLES' IGNORING THE PROBLEM WON'T MAKE IT GO AWAY.

HEY! WATCH THE CLAWS! THIS IS A BRAND-NEW OUTFIT!

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, ROBERTO. AT LEAST SHE ISN'T SOPPING WET AND COVERED WITH MUD, LIKE LAST TIME.

HOPE SHE DON'T TRY THIS STUNT WHEN SHE'S FULL GROWN. WE COULD GET SQUISHED.

WHAT D'YOU MEAN, "WE?!?" YOU'RE IN THE FRONT SEAT, WHERE IT'S SAFE!

THEN AGAIN, HER BEING FULL GROWN MIGHT HAVE... OTHER COMPENSATIONS.

I *BEG* YUIR PARDON!

I FOUND DANI!

IS SHE ALL RIGHT? IS SHE COMING WITH US?!

SHE APPRECIATES THE INVITATION, SHE SAYS, BUT SHE'D RATHER BE BY HERSELF FOR A BIT.

IS IT RIGHT TO LEAVE HER, STEVIE? SHE MAY NEED OUR HELP.

TRUE, SHAN, BUT DANI'S OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW HER OWN MIND. WE OWE IT TO HER TO TRUST HER JUDGMENT.

BESIDES, CHARLES IS HERE. IF THINGS GET HAIRY, HE'LL MINDCALL US.

I HOPE.

THEY'RE HEADING TOWARDS *SALEM CENTER.*

YOU'D BETTER ALERT HEADQUARTERS.

RIGHT. LOOKOUT ONE TO WIDEAWAKE -- STATUS REPORT--

-- VEHICLE REGISTERED TO STEVIE HUNTER PROCEEDING DOWN GRAYMALKIN LANE.

FOUR OCCUPANTS BESIDES HUNTER, ALL YOUNG PEOPLE -- PRESUMABLY XAVIER'S NEW STUDENTS. UNABLE TO CONFIRM IDENTITIES WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING OUR COVER.

LOOKOUT TWO IS COVERING THE ESTATE. REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS.

MAINTAIN DISCREET SURVEILLANCE. ADDITIONAL UNITS WILL JOIN YOU IN TOWN.

WHAT THEN, Mr. GYRICH? DO WE ARREST THEM?

*UNTIL YOU RECEIVE ORDERS TO THE CONTRARY, FEDUNIWICZ, YOU AND YOUR TEAM ARE TO DO ABSOLUTELY **NOTHING** THAT MIGHT ALARM THOSE CHILDREN, IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?! SHOULD THAT POLICY CHANGE, YOU'LL BE NOTIFIED. WIDEAWAKE, OUT.*

*WITH THAT, **HENRY PETER GYRICH**--SENIOR MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL, RESPONSIBLE TO THE PRESIDENT ALONE -- PONDERS HIS NEXT MOVE...*

... WHILE, BACK AT THE MANSION...

THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE PROFESSOR. HE MUST HAVE GONE OUT, TOO.

I'M GLAD. EVEN THOUGH I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO DO THIS ALONE, I DON'T WANT ANY WITNESSES-- NO ONE BUT ME TO KNOW WHETHER I SUCCEEDED...

...OR FAILED.

FROM WATCHING THE PROFESSOR, I KNOW THE CONSOLE'S A SNAP TO OPERATE. I SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE ACTIVATING ONE OF MY PERSONAL TRAINING SEQUENCES.

WHY BOTHER, THOUGH? WHAT AM I TRYING TO PROVE? I'M STILL TERRIFIED.

MAYBE THAT'S THE POINT. I WANT TO RUN-- WITH ALL MY HEART. AND SO, I BET, DID MOM AND DAD, AND GRANDFATHER. I'D SHOWED THEM THE MOMENT OF THEIR DOOM--IN ALL ITS HORROR--YET ***THEY*** FACED IT.

I MIGHT NOT BE GOOD ENOUGH TO STAY HERE-- I MAY FLUNK OUT OF THIS SCHOOL-- BUT ONLY AFTER I'VE TRIED MY VERY BEST. COME WHAT MAY, I'LL BE ABLE TO HOLD MY HEAD HIGH, WITHOUT SHAME, AS A CHEYENNE SHOULD!

MY FAMILY ARE PEOPLE OF HONOR AND COURAGE, PROFESSOR. YOU'LL FIND I'M CAST FROM THE SAME MOLD!

THE INSTANT SHE STEPS ACROSS THE DANGER ROOM'S THRESHOLD, THE TEST BEGINS...

OH!

ROBOTS!

MY POWER ONLY WORKS AGAINST LIVING BEINGS! IT'S USELESS AGAINST *THESE* THINGS. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I'M HELPLESS.

FAR FROM IT!

I'VE BEEN ROAMING THE MOUNTAINS SINCE I COULD WALK, HUNTING AND PLAYING WITH THE ANIMALS--WHO WERE MY ONLY TRUE FRIENDS, EVEN THEN.

I LEARNED ALL THEY COULD TEACH ME--ABOUT FIGHTING, AND NOT GETTING SNARED!

I TRIED HARD TO ACQUIRE THEIR SPEED AND POWER AND AGILITY.

NOW I'LL SEE IF I SUCCEEDED!

EXIT

THE ROBOTS DO WHAT THEY CAN TO STOP HER, BUT SHE MOVES THROUGH THEIR RANKS LIKE QUICKSILVER, AN EYE ALWAYS FIXED ON HER ULTIMATE GOAL.

THEN, AT LAST...

I MADE IT!

I PASSED THE TEST!!

ZAP!

OBLIVION FADES...

... AWARENESS RETURNS--

-- A BODY TWITCHING UNCONTROLLABLY IN THE AFTERMATH OF A MASSIVE STUNBLAST, A MEMORY OF MORE PAIN THAN SHE'D EVER IMAGINED, THOUGHTS IN JUMBLED DISARRAY, COLD METAL BENEATH HER CHEEK-- THE FLOOR OF THE DANGER ROOM.

IN THE BOOTH, HIDDEN FROM VIEW, COMPUTERS ARE ENGAGED, SAFETY INTERLOCKS DEACTIVATED.

DANGER
SAFETY INTERLOCKS OFF

BELOW, DANI'S EYES OPEN-- TO DISCOVER THAT THE ROOM HAS BEEN REPLACED BY A PRIMORDIAL SWAMP SHE REMEMBERS ONLY TOO WELL...

... AND A PREDATOR WHOSE INTENTIONS ARE ALL TOO OBVIOUS.

IT'S HUNGRY, DANI REALIZES, AND SHE IS DINNER. AND WORST OF ALL, THIS IS NEITHER TEST NOR ILLUSION-- BUT DEADLY REALITY.

NEXT ISSUE: SENTINELS

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